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SUBJECT: UK VIEWS ON DECEMBER EU FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING
(GAERC)

REF: A. STATE 195044

[1](#)B. STATE 194456

Classified By: Minister Counselor Maura Connelly for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (SBU) The UK expects Turkey and the China Arms Embargo to be the most "difficult" issues at the upcoming December GAERC meeting, according to Martin Sherman, head of the FCO's EU Coordination Office. PolCouns discussed the upcoming GAERC with Sherman on December 7, who confirmed Foreign Secretary Beckett would attend, and provided responses below to refel points.

[1](#)2. (C) China Arms Embargo. The UK shares USG opposition to lifting the current EU embargo. The UK is not expecting any movement on either the embargo or on the EU Code of Conduct (CoC), according to Sherman, who added that London is frustrated the issues are on the agenda at all. The Finnish Foreign Minister's personal interest in trying to move the CoC forward before the Finnish presidency concludes was why the issue is on the GAREC agenda, Sherman claimed, even though Paris remains committed to its position that it will not approve a revised CoC until the arms embargo on China is lifted. The UK remains opposed to ending the embargo as do "many other EU members," meaning, Sherman said, that there will be heated discussion, but no action taken.

[1](#)3. (C) Turkish Accession. The UK wants to keep the number of chapters closed, as a result of Turkey's failure to honor its commitments under the Additional Protocol, to as few as possible, preferably three, but less than the eight chapters recommended by the Commission. HMG agrees that imposing new requirements for European Council action before any of the affected chapters can be reopened would be counter-productive and hand opponents of Turkish accession a "powerful tool." Sherman said Turkey's recent announcement of plans to open one port was a case of "too little, too late," and unlikely to effect the GAERC discussions in any meaningful way.

[1](#)4. (C) Kosovo: Sherman said that there was still solid, but increasingly nervous, support for Ahtisaari's efforts. The UK supported the decision to delay submission of final status proposals to the parties until after the January 21 Serb election, but does not want any further delays. Sherman said that many EU members are growing worried about Moscow's reaction to the expected proposals, especially if Belgrade objects to them. Members are hearing "bad cop, good cop" versions of Moscow's likely reaction depending on whom Members engage with in the Russian Government. Despite this nervousness, Sherman expected the GAERC to issue a "good statement" in support of Ahtisaari and the process.

[1](#)5. (C) Iran. Sherman did not expect much discussion on Iran

as the general view among Members is that "the main action remains in New York." London does not think that there is much to be gained from pushing for an official statement at the GAERC, Sherman said, and does not intend to press for one.

16. (C) Lebanon/Israel/Palestinian Issues. There will be a strong statement of support for the Siniora Government, Sherman said. The UK goal for the discussion on Israel/Palestine is to keep the EU agreed on the need to build up good governance capabilities in West Bank/Gaza, support the Gaza cease-fire declaration, and welcome PM Olmert's agreement in principle to use Palestinian VAT revenue transfers in support of limited humanitarian projects, but with no weakening of the condition there must be acceptance of the Quartet principles before direct EU contacts resume with the Palestinian Authority. Sherman said that several Members want to discuss stepping up Quartet activity, which the UK does not oppose. On the Spanish Mid-East Initiative, Sherman said that the UK was hoping it would fade away from "quiet neglect."

17. (C) Afghanistan. EU assistance to Afghanistan is fixed and cannot be changed, but the UK wants to explore at the GAERC proposals on how to more effectively use the EU funds allocated. Sherman said that the UK was holding off on any decisions regarding police training until the return of an EU team now on the ground that is examining police training issues.

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